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AUTHOR Casamayou, Maureen Hogan; Mikhalevsky, Nina
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to explore the value of experiential education in the context of Washington internships and to consider the importance of role mentoring for female students in political science. The central question for this paper is whether the presence of female leadership role models and mentors in Washington internship programs offer more advantages (such as better job opportunities, a greater job satisfaction, and greater personal growth) for female students than if such students had interned with male leadership role models and mentors. To approach this question requires an examination of the nature of role models and mentors in Washington internships as these relate to the issue of gender inequity in female education. The document considers experiential education in general including a brief history and examination of its various forms. In particular it examines the purported theoretical goals of internships and then reviews some of the typical internship programs in Washington, D.C. The paper is structured as a speculative inquiry that raises more questions than it answers. The paper argues that female students arrive with documented disadvantages from the coeducational system. Although experiential education, and internship in particular, are valuable for all students, the structure of the internship and the internship with a woman leader, appears to address some very specific needs of the female student. Placing young women in a professional environment with other successful women will maximize opportunities for gender specific role modeling and mentoring based on shared experiences. (DK)

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WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP ROLES AND WASHINGTON INTERNSHIPS

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Maureen Hogan Casamayou and Nina Mikhalevsky

Mount Vernon College

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The purpose of this paper is to explore the value of experiential education in the context of Washington internships and to consider the importance of role mentoring for female students in political science. Washington D.C. is a haven for those students of political science who wish to directly experience the political life of the nation's capital. Many colleges throughout the United States have established internship programs that place students in the various organizations that comprise the Washington political community. Other colleges work to place their students through Washington based organizations, such as The Washington Center. These internships are a manifestation of experiential education -- a pedagogy that "refers to learning activities that engage the learner directly in the phenomena being studied."[1] They are the practical extension of classroom learning of political behavior -- whether such practical learning takes place in a congressional office, the White House, an executive agency, the Supreme Court, non profit organizations, a public policy think tank, or even in the District of Columbia government (for example, the City Council the mayor's office, or the D.C. Superior Court).

The central question for this paper is whether the presence of female leadership role models and mentors in Washington internship programs offer more advantages (such as better job opportunities, a greater job satisfaction, and greater personal growth) for female students than if such students had interned with male leadership role models and mentors. Our desire is to raise this question in a purely conjectural

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[1]Jane C. Kendall, Johm S. Duley, Thomas C. Little, Jane S. Permaul, Sharon Rubin, Strengthening Experiential Education within Your Institution, 3rd. edit. National Society for Internships and Experiential Education (NSIEE) (Raleigh: North Carolina, 1991), p. 1.

framework with the hope that it generates further research and debate.

To approach this question requires an examination of the nature of role models and mentors in Washington internships as these relates to the issue of gender inequity in female education. Let us first embark on a general consideration of experiential education including a brief history and examination of its various forms (including internships). In particular, we will examine the purported theoretical goals of internships and then review some of the typical internship programs in Washington DC.

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION AND ITS REDISCOVERY

In the words of two researchers, "Experiential education is not a new idea -- just a good idea that has been rediscovered."[2] Even before the establishment of the first universities, one could argue that the craft guilds and the apprenticeship system were the primary examples of the principle, "learning by doing."[3] Colonial higher education also emphasized the importance of practical knowledge. For example, the Connecticut Act of 1702 that preceded the founding of Yale University, prescribed a school where the young were instructed in courses such as arithmetic, astronomy, logic, grammar, geometry and music. The school also, "provided the practical training [in the Arts and Sciences] for students bent on a career in the Church or Civil State."[4] By the mid 1800's, the natural

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[2]Timothy Stanton and Kamil Ali, The Experienced Hand: A Student Manual for Making the Most of an Internship, 2nd ed., (Cranston, RI: Carroll Press, 1982).

[3]Ibid., p. 2.

[4]Thomas C. Little, "History and Rationale For Experiential Learning," Panel Resource Paper #1 NSIEE (Raleigh: Noerh Carolina, 1982), p.2.

sciences focused on education as a practical learning experience. Laboratory experiments were complemented by field trips as students from the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, "traveled from New York to Lake Erie on steamboats to study botany and visited the Pennsylvania coal mines to study biology."[5] The Morrill Act of 1862, in its goal of establishing land grant colleges, firmly established the principle of practical learning by its emphasis on promoting the study of "agriculture and the mechanical arts:"

> Field work, in a very literal sense, was part of the curriculum. The archives of land grant institutions are filled with reports and photographs of students in farming, dairying, and building construction.[6]

The 1800's, however, were marked by a separation of the scholarly from the practical as the rapidly increasing number of universities became the place for "cerebral endeavors" while teaching and learning practical skills were the domain of the craft guilds. With the onslaught of the industrial revolution and the demise of the craft guilds, the division between experiential and classroom learning became even more pronounced. Education, particularly the liberal arts education "became more and more theoretical and abstract, and further removed from the practicalities of life."[7]

The blending of both classroom and practical learning returned with the advent of professions at the turn of the century. In some cases, professions saw the need to complement the abstract learning in the classroom with some kind of

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[5]Ibid., p.3.

[6]Ibid., p.4.

[7]Timothy Stanton, et al., The Experienced Hand, p. 2.

experience-based learning. Law schools introduced moot court exercises and law clinics, while medical schools, such as the Johns Hopkins University, required on-the-job-experience in the form of medical internships for matriculation.[8] In other instances -- especially with regard to the newly developed professions -- there was a need for theory to balance the heavy emphasis on the practical. This was the case particularly for education in teaching, mechanical engineering, nursing and journalism professions.[9]

It was not until the sixties, with the student demand for "relevance" that colleges and universities acknowledged the need to complement classroom learning with some form of experience-based learning. As one source states:

> Colleges and universities began to experiment off-campus experiences as general educational opportunities and exciting programs began to attract growing numbers of students. Research began to demonstrate the educational merits of this 'new' mode of learning.[10]

However, this movement was by no means widespread.

Even in the nineties, in some academic institutions (especially in the liberal arts) the survival of experiential education is contingent on the commitment of enthusiastic professors whose efforts are not recognized by the prevailing reward structure of salary, promotion, and tenure.[11] In this

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[8]Ibid.; Thomas C. Little, "History and Rationale For Experiential Learning," p.5.

[9]Ibid., pp. 4&5.

[10]Timothy Stanton, et al., The Experienced Hand, p. 3.

[11]Kendall, Duley, et. al., Strengthening Experiential Education, p. 3.

way, experiential learning is viewed as "only an adornment or even a digression."[12] Yet, still others argue that "experience-based learning is growing exponentially" and consider this to be "one important response to the malaise of higher education, the problems of unemployed youth and a host of other social ills."[13]

In any discussion of experiential education, it is important to note the great variation in both meaning and the form of this term. Let us examine briefly the the lexicon associated with experience-based education and then specifically examine the internship program as an indispensable pedagogy in post secondary education.

The Multifacets of Experiential Education

Experiential education is described as the vital complement to "information assimilation" of classroom learning.[14] In particular, experiential education is an active form of learning which allows students to reach a deeper understanding of their object of study through direct observation and participation.[15] Reflection is an equal partner to the "doing" associated with experiential learning, and it appears to be a common strand among the various experiential learning theories.[16]

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Timothy Stanton, et al., The Experienced Hand,:p.3.

[14] James S. Coleman, "Differences Between Experiential and Classroom Learning, in Experiential Learning: Rationale, Characteristics, And Assessment, Morris Keaton & Associates, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977) p.50.

[15] Jane C. Kendall et all., Strengthening Experiential Education within Your Institution, p. 1.

[16] David A. Kolb, for example, is well known for his experiential learning cycle theory that blends both theoretical and practical learning. It consists of four stages: concrete

Supporters of experiential education argue that apart from enhancing the quality of education, it holds other benefits that are especially appealing for those "colleges and universities which are supported by taxes and hard-earned tuition funds."[17] These include, "an educated workforce, employable graduates for responsible citizenship, leadership, . . . [and] positive partnerships with business and the community" (the latter possibly leading to job contacts and placements in the private sector).[18]

As experiential learning has developed throughout history to meet various educational needs, the forms it has taken have become quite varied. It can be classroom-based such as simulations and games, but outside of the classroom, it can involve various learning programs that are not that much different from each other. For example, cooperative education is when students work and study alternate semesters, usually for pay; field study and practicums offer accredited practical experience in the students' academic area of interest; and service learning espouses public and community service that often includes an intercultural component.[19]

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experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and finally, testing out through active experimentation. See, David A. Kolb, Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development, (Englewood Cliff: NJ.: Prentice Hall, Inc, 1984). For a review of several, see, Lucy Cromwell, "Active Learning in the Classroom: Putting Theory into Practice," Experiential Education, (May-June 1993): pp.1, 18-23.

[17]Kendall, Duley et al., Strengthening Experiential Education within Your Institution, p. 2.

[18]Ibid.

[19]See, Timothy Stanton., et al., The Experienced Hand, p. 3. Also, for more examples of "classroom-based experiential education and for more explanantons of "service-learning" that

The internship in particular, is probably one of the most popular and most common form of experiential education in political science. An internship can be defined as:

> any experience wherein students learn by taking responsible roles as workers in organizations and observing and reflecting on what happens while they are there.[20]

(Since the above definition could equally apply to someone engaged in field work or a practicum, further research on experiential education could include efforts to clarify this terminology. There is also a need for refining the role of internships in the pedagogy of service learning). Internships, are touted as a unique learning experience. Apart from allowing the student to apply classroom learning to "real life " experiences, internships provide the students with opportunities for acquiring new skills and knowledge, for cultivating a greater sense of community or public service, for nurturing important job connections, and for personal growth through helping others and rising to the new challenges and problems of a work setting.[21] One source measures the success of an internship experience by the phrase, "expected outcomes," which:

> include[s] increased self-esteem and personal growth derived from successfully meeting new interpersonal and intellectual challenges, acquisition of particular

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was born in the late sixties. See, Robert L. Sigmon, "Service Learning: Three Principles," and Timothy K. Stanton, "Service Learning and Leadership Development: Learning to be efffective While Learning What to be Effective About," in Jane C. Kendall and Associates, Combining Service And Learning: A Resource Book for Community and Public Service, NSIEE (Raleigh: North Carolina,1990), pp. 56-64; p. 347.

[20]Timothy Stanton, et al.,The Experienced Hand, p. 1.

[21]Ibid., p. 4.

skills and knowledge, exposure to various work roles and career choices, and service to a particular community or group.[22]

A fascinating question to investigate would be whether one could ascertain empirically to what extent such "expected outcomes" become "actual outcomes" with former Washington interns. In any case, student monitoring and guidance by faculty, staff, and field supervisors would certainly have significant bearing on the success of the internship, and it is the role of the field supervisor and others (at the place of work) who interact with the student during the internship experience that is our greatest concern. Could these individuals become important leadership role models and mentors for these students? In the case of women students, does it necessarily matter whether or not such role models and mentors should also be female? Let us first examine several of the Washington D.C. internship programs and then scrutinize further the role of mentoring in Washington internships.

WASHINGTON INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

The salient selling point of the various Washington internship programs is the practical experience or exposure to the political process that supplements the book learning in the classroom environment. This is clearly seen in the justifiable emphasis placed on the actual internship experience, and in some cases, on the use of Washington experts on various aspects of the policy process and issues. Faculty members may still play an academic role (other than organizing and monitoring the students) by supervising the students' research paper, and even giving regular lectures on the theoretical perspective of American government and politics. There are numerous and varying

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[22]Ibid., p. 1.

internship programs currently operating in Washington D.C. which cover many academic fields.

For our purposes, the relevant internships are those that focus on public policy and/or American politics. Some of these programs are an extension of a university or college degree program where a faculty member manages the program with duties that range from finding office space and accommodation for the students, to being responsible for the students' placements. The faculty member monitors the students' progress and usually offers some form of weekly lectures and discussions for the students. The numbers of students involved vary, but generally are no greater than between twenty-five to thirty a semester.

Nationwide Internships

Other Washington internship programs are offered on a much larger scale where a university or college based in Washington offers a nationwide internship program in a wide array of academic fields.[23] One excellent example is the Washington Semester Program offered by the American University. This program was established in 1947 and attracts more than 350 students from over 200 colleges every year. According to their official brochure, the program:

> examines the major institutions and principal actors that determine public policy for the nation. Current issues confronting the republic and processes by which decisions are made constitute the core of the program. The result is a picture far richer in detail and more accurate than any found in an ordinary academic environment.[24]

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[23]The program has eight specializations for the student to choose: American Politics Public Law, American Politics, Economic Policy, Justice, Foreign Policy, Museum Studies and the Arts, Peace and Conflict Resolution, International Environment and Development, International Business and Trade, and Journalism.

[24]See brochure, The Washington Semester Program: American Politics, The American University, Washington DC 20016-8083.

The program carries a total of sixteen credits. The internship (which is for two days a week) and the research project are four credit hours each, but the seminar (which is equivalent to two courses) is eight credit hours. In the latter case, the bulk of the sessions focus on meetings with public officials and professionals in the Washington political community, and these meetings are "supplemented and interpreted," through faculty lectures and discussions.[25]

These nationwide Washington internship programs need not originate from the academic communities in the Washington metropolitan area. The Washington Center For Internships And Academic Seminars is a commercial enterprise that was established in 1975 and attracts hundreds of students every semester. The students apply for credit through their own university or college and engage in a four-and-one-half days of internship work at a location chosen by the Center. The students also have a weekly class on contemporary political issues taught by outside experts from the Washington political community.

In the study of Washington internships, a compelling question is the impact of leadership role models on the overall internship experience.[26] This line of inquiry -- especially with regard to the issue of gender will be addressed shortly. But, before we pursue this any further, let us define the concepts of role modeling and mentoring.

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[25]Ibid.

[26]The importance of role models and mentors for female aspirants is questioned by some scholars. See, for example, Jeanne J. Speizer, "Role Models, Mentors, and Sponsors: The Elusive Concepts," in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture ans Society, vol. 6. no.4, (1981), pp. 692-711.

The student interns are given the opportunity to observe, identify, and interact with persons who hold leadership positions in the Washington political community. These leaders include public officials, for example, and government professionals, such as office staffers and managers in government agencies and on the Hill, and non government professionals from think tank and interest group organizations. Such exposure, we could surmise, takes place while on the job during the interns' daily routine and during the weekly seminars offered by some of the internship programs. At the internship location, for example, interns work closely with their supervisors -- professionals in their own right, but they also may have the opportunity to observe and interact with senior government and even elected officials. These individuals can become role models to the student, "person[s] . . . . considered as a standard of excellence to be imitated."[27]

As they become part of the student interns' frame of reference, some of these individuals may become more than just a symbol of success and achievement to the student. By actively taking an interest in the students' development, they acquire a mentoring role.[28] In the words of one Washington political veteran:

> Mentors are growers, good farmers rather than inventors or mechanics. Growers have to accept that the main ingredients and processes with which they work are not

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[27]This definition was adopted by Sakre Kennington Edson in Pushing The Limits, (Albany:State University Press of New York, 1988), p. 61.

[28]See, John W. Garner, On Leadership, (New York: The Free Press, 1990), p. 169.

> under their own control. They are in a patient partnership with nature, with an eye to the weather and a feeling for cultivation.[29]

Of course, we may be assuming too much in that role models and mentors will transpire magically for student interns (both male and female) to emulate. Role modeling is somewhat contrived by the weekly seminars that certain internship programs offer, but for the most part, both phenomena probably are determined by chance and circumstance -- whoever, happens to interact with the student and has the time and the inclination to take an interest in that particular student will contribute some "mentoring" or influence. It is probably the field supervisors who have the greatest potential for such a mentoring role, because of their relative proximity to the student intern, Such persons have some authority and influence -- they are often the office managers -- but they are probably not very high in the organizational hierarchy. This is a question that such a study could further clarify.

Similarly, more data is needed regarding the place of senior personnel as role models and mentors for interns. One could argue, for example, that it would be unusual for a public office holder, assistant secretary, or bureau chief to take an undergraduate intern under his or her wing. In all likelihood, they do not have the time, nor the motivation since the intern is temporary (ten to fifteen weeks) -- so his or her loyalty and commitment to the organization cannot be assumed. Also, the intern is very junior -- an undergraduate who, while very intelligent and academically strong, is still not akin to the newly hired and credentialed novices at the entry level of the career ladder. In this case, like the corporate world, mentoring

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[29] Ibid.

is a serious commitment that is often corporate policy. R. Kanter states that:

> [mentors are] teachers or coaches whose functions are primarily to make introductions or to train a young person to move effectively through the system. Such mentors have the capability to fight for their mentees, share information with them that bypasses formal channels and provide a 'reflected power' to the mentees.[30]

Where female interns are exposed to both leadership role models and mentoring, would the gender of these authority figures make any difference to their internship experience? We would assume all things being equal, the female student intern, like her male counterpart, will reap the same rewards and benefits regardless of whether their role models and mentors are male or female? But do female and male students begin from positions of relative equality? In order to fully answer this question we must first examine the issue of gender inequity in primary and secondary education.

GENDER INEQUITY IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

One of the most important and growing areas of research pertaining to women has been in the area of learning theory and pedagogy. Some of the first studies by Myra and David Sadker, (as early as 1973) focused on the elementary classroom, and efforts have continued over the last twenty years to document and analyze the learning environment for females from the elementary level through graduate study and their professional

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[30] See, R. Kanter, Men and Women of the Corporation (New York: Basic Books, 1977) pp. 181-182. Also see, Sakre Kennington Edson, Pushing The Limits, p. 72.

development.[31] While the concern in this paper is with college and graduate level study and specifically the internship as a learning strategy and career development, it is important to understand what our female students have experienced before they reach the college classroom and what the consequences of their earlier education have been. Many features of experiential education generally, and the internship in particular, appear to address some of these systemic failures in female education.

Gender Disparities in Primary and Secondary School

In 1992, The American Association of University Women (AAUW) Educational Foundation commissioned a report produced by the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women. This report offered substantial evidence that "girls are not receiving the same quality, or even quantity, of education" as boys.[32] It also contained a series of recommendations designed to address gender inequity in the educational system.

In particular, while girls score as well as boys in standardized tests until the eighth grade, by grade ten, girls scores have dropped, and this disparity is particularly acute in math and science. By grade 12, boys outscore girls by 8 points on the verbal SAT and by 44 points in math. Twenty-five percent of boys take high school physics compared to fifteen percent of the girls. Boys also score better on advanced placement courses

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[31] Nancy Frazier, Myra Sadker, Sexism in School and Society (New York: Harper, 1973).

[32] The AAUW Report: How Schools Shortchange Girls. Prepared by the Wellesley College for Research on Women; AAUW Educational Foundation, Washington, D.C., 1992. The report does refer to the important interaction between gender, race, and ethnicity, and socio-economic status, but a more thoroughgoing examination was limited by insufficient data. See pp. 12-13. 33-36. Thus, a large portion of the findings are focused on studies of white males and females.

in math, physics and biology. On tests for admission to graduate and professional schools, males score higher on the MCAT (Medical College Admission Tests, the GMAT (Graduate Management Admissions Tests), and the GRE (Graduate Record Examination).[33]

Even when some girls have managed to achieve testing parity with boys, the outcomes for them are different. Where scholarships are given on the basis of SAT scores, proportionally more boys than girls receive these scholarships. Girls who are highly competent in math and science are still less likely to pursue careers in technical fields. The long term consequences of this last point are significant because those jobs requiring math and science backgrounds are not only at the higher end of the pay scale, but also in those areas which the Department of Labor forecasts some increased employment into the next century. Thus, closing women out of math and science contributes to their further, already documented economic inequity.

The causes for girls falling behind during their school years are to be found in three areas: teaching pedagogy, curriculum, and the classroom environment. Work done by the Sadkers showed that, compared to girls, teachers call on boys more, wait longer for boys to answer a question, give boys more detailed criticism, expect a higher level of critical thinking and respond more positively to boys who interrupt and speak out.[34] Other studies have shown that teachers tend to ignore girls in math and science classes altogether and, while counselors actively encourage boys to take more demanding

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[33]Ibid.

[34]Myra Sadker, David Sadker, "Sexism in the Schoolroom of the '80s," Psychology Today (March 1985) : 54-57; "Confronting Sexism in the College Classroom," in Gender in the Classroom: Power and Pedagogy, edited by Susan Gabriel and Isaiah Smithson (Chicago: University of Ilinois Press, 1990), p. 177.

courses, they will offer little resistance to girls who shy away from them.

Teachers evaluate the performance of boys and girls differently. When boys do poorly, teachers encourage a greater effort while girls are more likely to have their intellectual capabilities questioned. Whereas, girls are praised on the appearance of their work, boys are praised for their ideas. This "pattern of evaluative feedback given to the boys and girls in the classroom can result directly in girls' greater tendency to view failure feedback as indicative of their level of ability."[35]

Reading materials and textbooks have begun to incorporate the contributions and experience of women but much material, particularly in the sciences and social sciences, still makes little use of work by or about women. According to the AAUW report, only one of ten books assigned in high school English classes was written by a woman. Many textbooks ignore or stereotype women, and girls receive almost no information about issues of particular concern to them including sexual abuse, discrimination, and depression.[36]

Reports of sexual harassment of girls by their male classmates are increasing. (It is interesting to consider whether this is due to an increase in the actual number of incidents rather than due to a more receptive environment for girls who feel safe enough now to report them.) The report raises specific concerns about the insensitivity of school administrators who view many actions such as "skirt flipping" as "pranks" and who fail to understand how demeaning and hurtful these behaviors are to young girls.

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[35]Ibid., p. 179.

[36]The AAUW Report, pp. 60-74; pp.78-79.

Girls have less confidence in their mathematical skills than boys and as their confidence diminishes, so does their performance. An earlier AAUW study showed that girls' self-esteem declines at a faster rate than that of boys as they enter adolescence, and while the causes for this have not been determined, the study suggests that the gender biased classroom may be one possibility. The connection between self-confidence and academic achievement is an important one and the differential between a boy's and girl's positive self-image is mirrored in their different levels of academic success.

The Lack of Women Role Models and Implications

Another critical factor in developing a positive self-image is the presence of viable role models. While the majority of primary teachers are female, most secondary teachers, particularly in math and science are male. Administrators at all levels of education are predominantly male.[37] With the dearth of positive female figures in both the curricula and in the school environment, girls must seek out positive female images elsewhere. As we know, our society is only recently beginning to offer these in the culture at large. The report concluded, "Students sit in classrooms that, day in, day out, deliver the message that women's lives count for less than men's."[38]

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[37] Isaiah Smithson, "Investigating Gender, Power and Pedagogy," in Gender in the Classroom, p. 5. See also, Jean Baker Miller, Toward a New Psychology of Women, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986).

[38] The AAUW Report, p. 67. Female students who are not subject to the problems cited in these studies are those, not surprisingly, who attend single-sex schools. Girls who graduate from single-sex secondary schools do as well as or better than males from both coeducational and single-sex boys schools on standardized and advance placement tests. More of these students choose majors in math and science, attend graduate, medical, and professional schools than coeducated females. The same results hold true for graduates in women's colleges. These schools comprise roughly ten percent of all colleges and universities,

By the time girls reach college level study, the gender gap is clearly measurable in math related fields and even larger for science based study. (Studies of women who do go into science at college showed that the encouragement of their teachers was crucial). More importantly, studies show that for all women, regardless of major, the college classroom is still a "chilly climate," There are at least four identifiable factors responsible for this: i) most college and graduate curricula still either exclude the experiences and contributions of women, or marginalize these to special areas of study (college textbooks continue to omit or stereotype women); (ii) there are a disproportionately small number of female role models at the upper levels of faculty, staff, and administration; (iii) academic and professional advising of females is restrictive; (iv) in coeducational classrooms, males dominate discussion and receive more attention from instructors.[39]

The gender biased instruction patterns documented at the primary and secondary level continue to be found in the college classroom.[40] Women are called-on less and when they do participate they are more likely to be interrupted. Professors will give male students detailed instructions on how to complete complicated assignments but are more likely to help the female students complete theirs.

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but have placed more than thirty percent of all the women currently in graduate and professional schools. Women's college graduates are disproportionately represented in politcs, academe, and business.

[39]Cheris Kramerae, Paula Treichler, "Power Relationships in the Classroom," in Gender in the Classroom, p. 41; see also Nancy Frazier, Myra Sadker, Sexism in School and Society, p. 170.

[40]Ibid., Gender, p. 177.

Kramerae and Treichler conducted a study which identified "classroom interaction as a major reason why many women find the classroom inhospitable."[41] Their study revealed several important findings. First, while not an explicit focus for their study, Kramerae and Treichler found that students are "keenly aware of process issues and other aspects of classroom life."[42] The valuing of specific kinds of knowledge acquisition will also foster a certain form of classroom interaction, and "how participants talk in the classroom, shapes the kind of discovery and invention processes that occur."[43] The study showed that women are:

> more concerned than men with the teaching-learning process and attend more to the personal experiences of other students . . . they consider the openness and supportiveness of their instructor the salient factor in determining whether they feel comfortable about talking in class and give more importance than do men to the teacher's attempts to insure that class members feel good about each other . . . women are more likely to report enjoyment of classes in which students and teachers talk in a collaborative manner.[44]

The results were quite different for the men. The men indicated that they were less concerned with the personal aspects of the classroom interaction and more interested in their own active participation and in teacher control over discussion. The men preferred teachers who organized class content through lectures and they placed a priority on interaction which was

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[41] Ibid., Gender, p. 41.

[42] Ibid., p. 46; See also David A. Karp, William C. Yoels, "The College Classroom: Some Observations on the Meanings of Student Participation," in Sociology and Social Research, 60 (1976): 412-39.

[43] Ibid., p. 55.

based upon individual expertise and the elaboration of abstract concepts. This study shows some clear differences between males and females, not only in their expectations of the classroom, but also in their learning styles. However, the causes of these differences are less clear. Kramarae and Treichler are not prepared to argue for gendered learning strategies. They write:

> Girls and women are made to experience many types of social, political, and economic discrimination in educational settings and in other institutions which affect our daily lives. It seems indeed likely that the different classroom interaction patterns are due in part to the different societal constraints and privileges females and males experience.[45]

Belenky and others have argued, however, that learning styles are gender based.[46] They maintain that females have a collaborative and interactive learning style which draws more from an experiential and intuitive base, emphasizes the collective experience and seeks to connect the abstract to the personal and practical. This style fosters more group learning and diminished hierarchy in the learning environment. Males appear to be more individual in their learning styles, emphasizing the abstract and hierarchical and seeking discussion with clear "winners" and command of the subject. Because most classrooms are organized on this masculine model, females are at a disadvantage which they cannot overcome until teachers modify their pedagogies to account for the diversity of learning

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[45]Ibid.

[46]Mary Field Belenky et al., Women's Way of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind (New York: Basic Books, , 1986); See also, Francis Maher, "Classroom Pedagogy and the New Scholarship on Women," in Gendered Subjects: The Dynamics of Feminists Teaching, ed. Margo Cully, Catherine Portuges (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985).

styles.[47] This debate between those who believe learning styles are gender based and those who attribute these differences to conditioned behavior is ongoing.

While women have made progress in the teaching ranks, there are still disproportionately few females at the full professor level, in academic administration and staff, as well as in certain disciplines. Thus there are fewer women available for role models and, for the female student, some shared basis experience. The monitoring process becomes critical at advanced stages of intellectual and professional development and female students have fewer opportunities to be assisted by other women during the final stages of their disciplinary research of professional training. The transition from the completion of graduate or professional study to a job is often made possible by an academic or professional mentor. Female students frequently find this the most difficult period in their advancement because they lack a requisite female support system. If a student chooses to enter a non-traditional field, she will often be one of very few females in either the classroom or in the work place. Those women who do find jobs in academe are, however, less likely to be published. Because a good research and publication record is critical to promotion, there are fewer women are found at the tenured or advanced academic ranks. The May/June 1993 journal of the AAUP concludes that "women's work is perceived to be of lower quality; women are rarely cited as having made scholarly contributions; and women continue to suffer significant

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[47] "The men are more interested than are women in the content of the learning, with the cognitive and nonpersonal aspects of classroom interaction . . . they express more interest in teachers who organize most of the class content through lectures and who encourage questions and comments from individual students." Kramarae, Treichler, "Power Relationships in the Classroom," in Gender in the Classroom, p. 55.

disadvantages throughout their academic careers."[48]

The recommendation of the AAUW report, the findings of the Sadkers and others, converge on several points pertaining to ways in which the educational community can address questions of gender equity and compensate for the continuing discrimination women face. In addition to changes in academic programs, hiring and faculty development, instructors need to effect teaching strategies which are devoid of gender biases. Many of these changes are currently underway, most notably in the area of curricula reform.[49] Both the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education have provided funds to institutions seeking to develop a more gender balanced curriculum.

The proliferation of studies pertaining not only to current educational experiences of women, but also to what may be gender based learning styles have begun to change classroom environment. These changes are seen almost exclusively at the college level and too often only in disciplines related to Women's Studies. Both the AAUW report and researchers in the area of feminist epistemology recommend training for teachers who work with females:

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[48] L. Billard, "A Different Path Into Print," Academe, (May/June 1993), p. 29.

[49] Women's Studies majors have increased dramatically in the last ten years. In 1973 there were 78 programs and in 1990, 621. A survey done in 1984 showed that women's studies courses were offered at 68.1 percent of universities and 48.9 percent of two year colleges. See National Women's Studies Directory of Women's Studies Programs, 1990. For some discussion of curriculum reform, see Elizabeth Langland, Walter Gove, A Feminist Perspective in the Academy: The Difference it Makes, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Jean F. O'Barr, ed., "Reconstructing the Academy," special issue of Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, no. 12 (1987).

> State certification standards for teachers and administrators should require course work on gender issues, including new research on women, bias in classroom interaction patterns, and the ways in which schools can develop and implement gender fair multicultural curricula.[50]

In sum, as the AAUW study indicates, the lack of constructive contact with teachers and professors, the few incentives to develop high levels of competence, the irrelevant demeaning classroom materials, and last but not least, a dearth of role models in the learning environment, characterized much of the female academic history.

WOMEN AS LEADERSHIP ROLE MODELS AND MENTORS

If we turn now to an examination of the internship program, theoretically, at least, we can see some clear advantages to placing female students with professional women rather than men -- especially if these successful women become the students' mentors. The "expected outcomes" discussed earlier take on a much more meaningful experience for women interns. They are placed in an environment where they see women professionals interacting with male professionals in the Washington political community. In this way, two of the "expected outcomes" -- self-esteem and personal growth -- need not simply be the result of acquiring new skills, or of blending theoretical with practical learning, or of responding to challenging work assignments. Self-esteem and personal growth may also be the very important by product of working closely with highly skilled professional women -- those who not only mentor in constructive ways but who also engage the student in a shared basis of experience. This allows the student to compensate for many of the deficiencies in her educational background.

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[50] AAUW Report, p. 85.

Working with a female professional can also expose the female intern to a different leadership style, but equally, if not more important, the professional female role model and mentor offers the student an opportunity to develop a more constructive self-image.[51] Working with a woman who has achieved success, demonstrates the viability of her own professional goals, and offers some evidence that women are valued. The feasibility of one's goals and the validation of individual experience are critical in developing and maintaining self-image and self-esteem for career motivation and success. In a study of female educational administrators, it was noted that a female sponsor or mentor can be "especially important" for female aspirants: "As role model as well as mentor, women in leadership roles can offer something men cannot. When women in this study talk about successful female administrators, their pride is evident."[52] The author of the study, Sakre Kennington Edson, observed that:

> With few women currently employed in public school management, female educators lack same-sex representatives upon which to pattern their career aspirations and goals. Without these standards of excellence, some women find themselves questioning not only their desire to be school executives, but their ability to perform competently should they be hired.[53]

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[51]On leadership style of women office holders, see, for example, Sue Tolleson Rinehart, "Do Women Leaders Make a Difference? Substance, Style and Perceptions?" and Susan Abrams Beck, " Rethinking Municipal Governance: Gender Distinctions on Local Councils," in Gender And Policymaking: Studies of Women in Office, Debra L. Dodson (edit), Rutgers: The Center for American Women in Politics, 1991, pp. 93-113.

[52]Sakre Kennington Edson, Pushing the Limits, p. 75.

[53]Ibid., p. 61.

Although the women in this particular study were apparently undeterred in their aspirations despite the lack of role models "the effect of never seeing a female educator in a position of authority" did act as a damper on earlier desires to apply for administrative work. As one interviewee stated, "I remember looking around as a young girl and not seeing any female principals or even a woman counselor with whom girls could relate -- no women with influence or decision-making power."[54] Does this mean that women role models and mentors are an indispensable ingredient for a successful Washington internship experience for women? So far, there is nothing empirically conclusive that women interns would fare better with women as leadership role models and mentors, but the findings on the gender inequity outlined in the AAUW report would indicate that there is a good case for asserting that female interns could benefit greatly. Yet, such an assertion must be borne with certain considerations in mind.

Qualifying Factors

If we assume, that role modeling and mentoring do take place, we must be aware that women, just like men, will vary in their mentoring capabilities. Just because the intern supervisor is a woman, does not necessarily mean she will be a superb role model and mentor for the female intern. Indeed, in the study of educational administrators mentioned earlier, there were illustrations of females in leadership positions who decidedly did not offer encouragement and support. In such a case, the

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[54] Ibid., pp. 62-63. This was a longitudinal study, based upon questionnaires and interviews of 142 women "across the nation who actively sought at least a principalship in the public school system." As the author states, the women did not comprise a representative cross section of female administrative aspirants throughout the nation, so any conclusions must not be attributed to a "composite or 'typical' portrait of women advancing in the field."

"blow [was] doubly painful."[55] The reasons for such behavior are varied. Fear of additional competition in a field where there were few openings and lack of time and energy, were two major explanations.[56]

Also, there is a dearth of women (including women of color) in the top leadership positions in the Washington political community, and this has important implications for the female Washington intern. In the executive branch, for example, women accounted for only 20 percent of President Bush's appointments requiring Senate confirmation.[57] Moreover, even though the election year of 1992 was proclaimed "The Year of the Woman," the increase in the representation of women (including both white women and women of color) in the US Congress was infinitesimal. In the House of Representatives, this was from six to eleven percent and from two to seven percent in the Senate. In many respects, the political world is still a man's world. Peggy Noonan, in her book on her experience as a speechwriter in the Reagan and Bush White House notes the whole culture and tone of her place of work was masculine. She "had entered a place where men are completely in charge," and who evaluate each other in terms of "college/Ivy League/sports."[58] She also observed that the "art of this house is a masculine art,

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[55]Ibid., p. 76.

[56]Ibid.

[57]Rogelio Garcia, Analyst in American National Government, "Women Nominated and Appointed to Full-Time Civilian Positions by President George Bush, Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, 92-459 GOV. (Washington D.C. May 18, 1992).

[58]Peggy Noonan, What I saw at the Revolution: A Political Life in the Reagan Era," Ballantine Books, New York, 1990, p.58.

great ships on the bounding main, and the air is thick with cries of men. If paintings made sound we would duck from the din."[59]

In such cases where the aspiring female intern lacks female role models and/or mentors, at least two options are available to her. First, she can take full opportunity of sympathetic male role models and mentors who encourage female intellectual development, independence, and self-esteem. (Indeed, it is important to remember that the mentoring role specifically addresses the educational deficiencies of their earlier education). In the study of educational administrators, stated earlier, there was a decided lack of women in leadership positions, but "many women" in her study, found sensitive male mentors whose encouragement and guidance were instrumental in their career advancement.[60] In addition, as women returned to college for further education, they often found "their male professors a source of encouragement and support."[61]

Second, she can participate in an internship program deliberately crafted to compensate for the problem of few available women in leadership positions. Washington internship programs that make a conscious attempt to place women interns with women in leadership positions are described below.

WASHINGTON INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP AND MENTORING

An excellent example is the Public Policy Internship Semester program managed by the Public Leadership Education Network (PLEN) (a seventeen member consortium of womens' colleges throughout the nation). This organization was founded in 1978 by

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[59]Ibid., p. 44.

[60]Ibid., pp. 73-75.

[61]Ibid., p. 74.

Francis Tarlton (Sissy) Farenthold who was committed to educating women as public leaders. With grant money from the Carnegie Foundation, PLEN, consisting of five member colleges, began the task of exposing its women students to women leaders in the political process. A recent report on the history of PLEN states:

> Wells College brought in women who were making a difference in the public policy arena at campus conferences where they could speak to and interact with students. Stephens recruited a woman leader to serve as a politican-in-residence who co-taught with a faculty member for a semester. Goucher sponsored students who worked as interns with women members of the Maryland General Assembly. Carlow ran a series of continuing education workshops for women running for office. Spelman developed courses on African American women in politics.[62]

It was in 1983, that PLEN successfully experimented with a Washington based experiential program for women students. The Women And Public Policy Seminar "was the first Washington program featuring women leaders as teachers and role models to be launched under the PLEN banner."[63] By 1990, PLEN was fully based in Washington and it launched its Public Policy Internship Program. Since 1990, the program has averaged between five to ten students each semester. The internships cover a five-day period with a weekly seminar that features women leaders in the Washington political community. For example, during the Spring semester, one speaker was a legislative assistant from House of Representative Lee Hamilton's office, another was the Vice President of Independent Sector, a philanthropic organization.

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[62]PLEN 15th Anniversary Report, Washington DC, February 1993, p. 2.

[63]Ibid.

Although some of these organizations will not be headed by a woman at least the supervisor is usually a woman. When this is not the case -- often when the student independently chooses her internship -- PLEN does attempt to compensate for this by the general requirement that students interview (for at least thirty minutes) a woman in the office or organization where she is interning other than her direct supervisor. Not only must she take note of the leadership styles and methods "employed in the organization," but also explore the "roles that women and people of color play in the leadership and decision-making within the organization/office."[64] Most importantly, the student must report "the results of her interview and (her) own observations regarding structure, leadership styles, and the roles of women in (her) office/organization."[65]

In terms of the benefits of the program, students claimed that it afforded them "the opportunity to see how the system really works," and the opportunity "to meet real women who are making a difference . . . and the chance to make connections with women who will help open doors for them."[66] For many female interns, such contacts represent their first exposure to successful women in the practical domain of politics.

Other provisions for providing role models for women students are in the form of public policy seminars, such as the fourteen day Women And Public Policy Seminar offered by PLEN in the early Spring semester (73 attended the 1993 session) and the

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[64]"Weekly Seminar Syllabus," PLEN Internship Semester, Women and Public Policy, February 1 - April 30, 1993, PLEN, Washington DC 20036.

[65]Ibid.

[66]Ibid.

The Washington Center's fourteen-day seminar in women's leadership, entitled, "Women As Leaders," offered in late May. With both programs, course credit is granted by the participating colleges, and this is usually either two or three units. Women students enrolled in these programs from across the country, and with PLEN, this even involved students from non PLEN colleges. With the Washington Center Seminar, two students are systematically recruited -- through competitive entrance requirements -- from each state and the District of Columbia.[67] Understandably, these programs were not identical in format. Indeed, PLEN seemed to emphasize the role of women leaders in the public policy process whereas the Washington Seminar emphasized women's policy issues.

Nevertheless, they had several features in common -- both highlighted the importance of role models by the exposure of women students to the rich array of women speakers holding leadership positions in the public and private sector in Washington DC. In addition, these two programs identified the importance of women mentors in that PLEN featured a Mentor Dinner in which "40 successful women working in public policy [informally] share[d] information and advice with the students."[68] The Washington Center required that each student "spend a day with a professional mentor" in their "chosen field of study."[69] Last but not least, both programs provided workshops on leadership style and strategies in the workforce.

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[67]The 1993 "Women As Leaders" Seminar was sponsored by Sears, Roebuck and Co. Students were only responsible for travel and living expenses during the tweleve days.

[68]PLEN Programs Report, PLEN, Washington DC, 1993, p.3.

[69]See brochure, 9th. Annual "Women As Leaders" Washington Seminars, The Washington Center, Washington DC, 1993, p. 1.

CONCLUSION

This paper has been a speculative inquiry into the impact of female role modeling and mentoring on female Washington interns. We have raised far many questions than we have answered, but that has been the object of this work. Of compelling necessity is the need for hard data to shed more light on this question. Initially, before embarking on a more sophisticated empirical investigation, a pilot study, could be conducted that measures the degree of success of the internship through ranking the students' evaluation of their male and female role models and mentors. The success of the internship would be subjectively measured, based upon the student's perceived satisfaction with her responsibilities and with the kind of impact (if any) of those persons within her sphere of activity. The findings could then be cross tabulated to ascertain any possible relationship between the ranking and gender.

In sum, we know that female students come to us with documented disadvantages from the coeducational system. We also know that there is great value in experiential education, and the internship in particular, for all students. But the structure of the internship and the internship with a woman leader, appears to address some very specific needs of the female student. Placing young women in a professional environment with other successful women will maximize opportunities for gender specific role modeling and mentoring based on shared experiences. While much more work needs to be done in securing data on gender based mentoring, the evidence, at least points to the viability of placing young women with women leaders and maximizing their opportunities for role modeling and mentoring.